

Chapter 17

GANNON

I had just dropped Abbie back to the castle and left her with Clarice when Liam finds me. He is leaning against my door as I walk toward my room. Liam smiles when he spots me. He has cold and calculating eyes. "Looking for me?" I ask, and a smirk slips onto his face. His presence alone intimidates most people. You can tell there is something not quite right with Liam. He is unhinged. Despite his boyish good looks, nothing instills fear more than this man among the King's guard. Some call him the King's mad dog, and based on the things I've seen, it's an apt description.

"No, I figured I would just lean against your door because I am not waiting for you."

I grunt and shake my head. Danger emanates out of him. He has an air of superiority and seems to relish the power he has over others, just like he relishes cutting them into tiny pieces. The man is a psychopath, but then again, so am I. So his crazy compliments mine, which is why we are best friends.

"And where were you?" he drawls, and I roll my eyes at him. "I thought we were heading to the bar," he asks, pushing off my door frame,

twisting the door handle, and waltzing into my room. I growl at him when he jumps onto my bed, making himself comfortable. He runs his fingers through his blonde hair and falls back on my bed.

"Something else came up," I tell him. Liam rolls over, pulling his knife from his pocket. He picks at my duvet with the tip before twirling his knife between his fingers and eyeing me suspiciously.

"Does it have anything to do with the pretty little redhead I saw you in town with earlier?" I look over my shoulder at him as I grab two beers from the mini fridge in the corner of my room. I chuck him one.

"If you already know where I was, why are you asking?"

He shrugs, popping the lid off with his knife and propping himself up with one elbow.

"The girl reminds me of," I growl warning him not to mention her name.

"Is that part of the allure you have toward her because she reminds you of your dead mate?" Liam questions, and I eye him, swigging from my bottle.

"She is nothing like her," I tell him, and Liam shrugs.

"That may be true, but you must admit they have an uncanny resemblance, don't you think?" he taunts, and my hand moves before I realize what I have done. My fingers find the blade I always keep strapped to my hip. It whizzes through the air, embedding itself in the bed head beside his head. Liam doesn't even flinch. He just lifts an eyebrow at me.

"Apparently, I'm right," he chuckles, yanking the blade from the headboard.

"I wonder if sweet little Abbie would enjoy your fetish for knives," he muses, examining it before moving so quickly I only just see the blade coming toward my face. I catch the blade before it hits me square between my eyes. The edges slice my palm and fingers as the knife slides between, cutting through my flesh, the point just nicking my skin between my eyes.

Liam chuckles, sipping his beer and leaning back against the headboard.

"Or are you envisioning carving her up like your mate, slicing that tender flesh and watching her bleed out the way you did her?"

"Fuck off, Liam, you know nothing," I tell him.

"Ah, but I do; I was there, remember? And I know you... and that girl is a timid little thing and so jumpy. Scared of her own shadow, she is."

"What are you getting at?" I snap, grabbing an old shirt to clean my bleeding hand. Liam shrugs.

"Just curious, Gan. I don't want you to break her. It would be a shame really, I don't mind watching her prance around in her little uniform." His words cut off when I launch myself at him, my hands locking around his throat, and he cackles his head off, laughing like a maniac.

"Seems I'm right. You like the girl," Liam laughs.

"I don't. I took her to town, and that is it. I took her for Clarice," I add.

"I can smell lies, but if you wish to tell yourself that, we can pretend," he says, sending me a wink, and I growl, shoving him back on the bed and climbing off him.

"I took her to town, Liam, nothing more," I tell him, wandering off into the bathroom. I wash my hands and remove my clothes, drop them in the hamper, and step into the shower, shutting the door. Liam leans on the doorframe, watching me.

"If that is so, why were you by her door last night and the night before, or better yet, what were you doing watching her from the old guard towers? You know, the ones? The ones that look directly into her bedroom window?"

"Explain to me why you are following me?" I retort, turning the water on and stepping under the water spray.

Turning, I look at him as his eyes wander the length of me. I know he is bisexual. His sexuality has never bothered me, and I am used to his comments and wandering gaze. However, he also knows I don't swing that way.

"Was curious about why you stood me up last night, for one. And then this morning you vanished and ever since she got here." He shrugs.

"Why, are you jealous Liam?" I laugh.

"Always. You know I am not good at sharing," he jokes, and I chuckle.

"Don't worry. You won't have to share me. I am not interested in the girl," I tell him.

"We'll see, though it wouldn't hurt if you were, as long as it isn't for nefarious reasons, Gannon," Liam says, and I swallow.

"Yes, she reminds me of my mate, but that isn't why." I shake my head. I am not interested in her. It's hard to imagine even having a conversation with her with how timid she is.

"I am leaving to run an errand for the King. Join me or don't," Liam states with a shrug, glancing out the bathroom window toward the forest surrounding the castle.

"She is a beauty, though," he mumbles, and I nod. Abbie is striking with her dark auburn hair and soft, sensual features. She is small and petite, and I like that about her. I like the way she stares curiously at everything around her. Like she is deciphering codes, genuinely curious about people yet soft-spoken. She is an observer. That much I have noticed. She exists without being seen and doesn't like the attention, but notices everyone else like she is waiting for something to jump out of the shadows at her.

"Hasn't she shifted yet? I could smell she has a wolf?" Liam asks curiously, still peering out the window. I lean around to see what he is looking at. Abbie is hanging out washing, yet stares vacantly toward the forest. My brows furrow, and I watch as she steps toward the trees, looking longingly at them, when I hear Clarice sing out to her. She pauses, glances over her shoulder, and rushes back to the clothesline as if she thinks she will get into trouble.

"To me, it seems she wants to go for a run," Liam says with a shrug, passing me a towel off the rack. His eyes are trained on the girl. I swallow because I had noticed she hasn't shifted once since being here. And I know she is of age. It makes me wonder what her wolf looks like.

"I'll cover for you if you wish," Liam offers, but I shake my head. No, I need to get away from here and slice some poor sucker who is dumb

enough to capture the King's attention. It seems like the perfect excuse to leave.

"No need. I need to get out of here," I tell him.

"Out of here or away from her?" Liam asks. I growl, and he smirks.

"I'll meet you in the car, and I drive," he says, and I huff but let it slide. Liam is my best friend and the only one who truly knows me. We are alike in more ways than one.